

Economic Services Administration National American Indian Heritage Month Celebration

By Jeannie Bowen

On November 6th, the Division of Child Support, Tribal Relations Team (TRT) and the Community Services Division, State-Tribal Relations Unit (STRU), hosted our 14th annual celebration of National American Indian Heritage Month.



Pictured on the right cooking fry bread: Marla Conwell, South Puget Intertribal Planning Agency (SPIPA) and Loni Rickard, SPIPA. Below left: Mike Mowrey, ESA STRU Manager. Below center: Vickie Era-Pankretz, local American Indian artist.

Native Americans have made distinct and significant contributions to the United States and the rest of the world in many fields including agriculture, medicine, music, language, art and countless others. ESA's annual celebration seeks to promote and recognize these contributions and bring

awareness to the sacrifices and challenges Native American's have experienced throughout history.

This year we had our largest turn-out ever! Well over 100 people attended the Celebration held at Capital View I in Olympia. Our Celebration included the following:

- Luncheon featuring delicious fry bread for Indian Tacos
- Educational presentation and display by Vickie Era-Pankretz, local American Indian artist
- Continuous slide show featuring photos taken at many years of partnership events including Tribal Canoe Journeys and prior Heritage Month events
- Tribal information resource table



Pictured top center: Loni Rickard, Marla Conwell, and Mary Dupuis, SPIPA; Top right: Kimberly Curtis, DCS Policy and Jeannie Bowen DCS TRT. Pictured center left: Mike Mowrey, ESA STRU manager. Pictured bottom left: Lori Webb, Olympia DCS Tribal Liaison; Jeannie Bowen DCS TRT, Sandi Cheek, DCS TRT; Kathy Lake-Baker, Olympia DCS Tribal Liaison; Monica Fierro, DCS Central Services. Pictured bottom right: Vickie Era-Pankretz, local American Indian Artist and husband Douglas Pankretz.

One of the highlights of the event was meeting and learning from Vickie Era-Pankretz, Alutiiq/Sugpiag Alaska Native and local American Indian Artist.

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Vickie provided an outstanding educational presentation and display of her traditional Native American basketry and jewelry. She has been teaching and showing professionally for 20 years and has woven with many Northwest Tribal master basket weavers. She uses traditional materials of cedar, spruce root, and grass in her basketry. Everyone was fascinated with the intricacy and complexity of her art, and the great information she shared about her tribe, family, and culture!

Our sincere appreciation to everyone participating in the Celebration including those who volunteered time, food, and donations! Your generosity assured everyone could enjoy the luncheon, dessert, and entertainment. We look forward to seeing you next year!